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Governor Launches Watershed Initiative

Fourth Graders Join Governor in Kickoff event in Salt Lake City

SALT LAKE CITY--“We’re going to have a better Utah because we’re willing to get out and work to protect our watersheds,” proclaimed Utah Governor Olene Walker, as she kicked off the Governor’s Watershed Initiative November 24, 2003.

The initiative calls for working toward improving 25 rivers and lakes throughout the state over the next year (<http://adoptawaterbody.utah.gov/imparedg.htm>). The top 25 is spread out throughout the state and includes streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands.

The governor also asked Utahn’s to pitch in. “We’re going to call on volunteers across the state to get involved in these watersheds; to help protect them, to clean them up, and, in some cases, to plant trees,” as part of the Adopt-A-Waterbody program (See related story on page 3).

Speaking to a group of 4th grade students from Jackson Elementary in Salt Lake City, Walker said “this is my watershed and it’s your watershed

too.” She urged the students and all Utahn’s to get to know their watersheds. “Certainly if we improve the watersheds in this state, it will make it a better place to live.”

A watershed is an area of land from which all water drains to the same location such as a stream, pond, lake or wetland, the governor explained in much the way a teacher would. “We should all call them life sheds, because without them we could not live,” she added.

While the Governor did not go into detail about every way the 25 rivers and lakes would be improved, she did outline some of her public involvement goals for the initiative. She plans to:

- Lead an effort to double the number of Adopt-A-Waterbody

See "Governor" on page 2

Adopt-A-Waterbody Highlighted as Major Part of Governor's Initiative



The Adopt-A-Waterbody program provides support and recognition to volunteers taking care of Utah's rivers, stream, lakes, reservoirs, wetlands and aquifers

Now is the time Utahn’s Governor Olene Walker wants you to help achieve her new Watershed Initiative. (See the story on the initiative on this page).

One of the priorities within the Governor’s Watershed Initiative is to double the number of Adopt-A-Waterbody groups in Utah in a year. Adopt-A-Waterbody is a community-focused program that encourages volunteer groups to adopt stretches of rivers, lakes, wetlands or even ground

water aquifers and take care of them. Adopting groups can include schools,

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Bill Damery, Utah Division of Water Quality, demonstrates how ground water moves and how people use ground water to Governor Walker and 4th graders from Jackson Elementary School.

"Governor" continued from front

groups (<http://adoptawaterbody.utah.gov>).

- Encourage 4th teachers to teach about watersheds and water. She recommends teachers use the Utah Office of Education sponsored set of lesson plans titled The Search for the Water Cycle.
- Use the existing Take Pride in Utah program to promote cleanup and conservation volunteer projects throughout the state.
- Recognize groups which have adopted water bodies and claim victory for cleaner and healthier watersheds.
- Encourage 4th graders and all Utahns to answer five key questions about watersheds:

1. What is a watershed?
2. Where is my watershed?
3. How healthy is my watershed?
4. Where does the water go?
5. What can I do?

“It’s my goal to provide for cleaner rivers and lakes,” Walker told the students.

Cary Peterson, Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food, said that Utah’s forested watershed areas have already lost 60 percent of their aspen groves that act as filters to cleanse the state’s air.

This is a great initiative by our governor,” Peterson said. “I commend her. She’s on the same page as our President who is looking at healthy forests.”

Because of development, road

construction, harvesting and fire, there are a lot of watershed areas near water bodies and upland that need trees planted. The Governor suggested that volunteers can be very helpful with this important part of the initiative.

Dianne Neislon, executive director, Utah Department of Environmental Quality, said education is the key to the success of the initiative.

“All of you can make a difference,” she told the students.

And the Governor and her cabinet members expect to make a difference in watersheds throughout the state. But along with volunteers, the state is looking to local agencies and organizations to lead local watershed improvement efforts.

“This initiative will be a great benefit for watershed managers throughout the state,” said Jeff Salt, chairman of the statewide Watershed Coordinators Council and executive director of the Salt Lake County Audubon Society. “This is going to be great news for rural watersheds,” Salt added.

Peterson stressed the importance of continued strong local leadership in watershed planning and improvement. The Utah Association of Conservation Districts, local soil conservation district supervisors, county Extension agents, and Natural Resources Conservation Service employees at the local level are going to be very important in this effort.

The Governor called on her cabinet members, Peterson, Nielson, and Bob Morgan, Utah Department of Natural Resources, to report their progress to her in a year.

"Adoption" continued from front page



Utah Governor Olene Walker and Bob Morgan, executive director, Utah Department of Natural Resources, confer at the map of 25 focus areas.

churches, scout troops, civic groups, families, and individuals. According to the Governor, volunteers can make a real difference in a watershed.

“It is my goal to provide for cleaner rivers and lakes, Walker said in late November, as she kicked off the fourth element of her Walker Work Plan with 4th grade students from Jackson Elementary in Salt Lake City.

Walker challenged the fourth graders with her and all Utahns to adopt a nearby body of water. “We’re going to call on volunteers across the state to get involved in these watersheds; to help protect them, to clean them up, and, in some cases, to plant trees.”

One of the main elements of the Governor’s Watershed Initiative is to double the number of Adopt-A-Waterbody (AAW) groups by this time next year. Currently there are about 40 active groups that adopt a body of water by picking up trash, clearing weeds, planting trees and other vegetation, monitoring the quality of the water and educating their neighbors about how to prevent water pollution.

“This is a great opportunity to enhance a program that has been around for 10 years and, at the same time, provide real help to Utah’s water resources,” said Jack Wilbur, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food. Wilbur, along with AAW coordinators from the Utah Division of Water Quality, Utah Department of Natural Resources, and Utah State University, manages the program.

The Governor has also picked 25 watershed areas in Utah to focus on this year. She wants new groups to sign up in each of those areas.

Adopting groups will receive technical assistance if needed to complete their project(s), recognition from the state, assistance attracting media coverage (if requested by the group), and, in some cases, funding to purchase materials needed to complete a project.

For more detailed information about the Adopt-A-Waterbody program, log onto the web site: <http://adoptawaterbody.utah.gov>. Also see the AAW story on the next page.

Utah Watershed Review

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Governor Walker stands with Utah Commissioner of Agriculture Cary G. Peterson and three students from Jackson Elementary during the Governor's Watershed Initiative kickoff at the Memorial House in Memory Grove, Salt Lake City.

Jacobson Honored with Quate Award

UACD 55th Annual Convention
Utah's conservation district supervisors, staff and partners learned about the complexity of Utah water issues at the 55th annual UACD Convention Nov. 13-14, 2003, in St. George. Titled "The Politics of Water," the convention featured Larry Anderson, director of the Division of Water Resources, who presented the state's plan to provide water to a growing urban population.

John Wilkins-Wells of Colorado State University shared common myths about agricultural water use and water conservation. Participants also heard from Gary Mast, National Association of Conservation Districts, who said NACD is working hard to represent district interests in Washington, D.C.

One of the highlights this year for many people associated with the conservation district and agricultural water programs, was the presentation of the Graham S. Quate Award. Kyle "Jake" Jacobson, supervisor of the soil conservation programs of the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) and administrative officer for the Utah Soil Conservation



Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food, Cary G. Peterson (right), presents the award to Jacobson (left) and his wife Annette (center), at the 55th Annual UACD Convention in St. George in November 2003.

commission was honored for his outstanding service to soil conservation programs in Utah.

Jake has worked for UDAF since 1972 and with the conservation districts for the past 22 years. Jake

and his wife Annette, have six adult children and eight grand children. They reside in Kaysville.

Adopt-A-Waterbody Web Site/Program gets Facelift

Utah Governor Olene S. Walker has adopted the Adopt-A-Waterbody (AAW) program. Now AAW has to quickly shine in its new-found spotlight.

Adopt-A-Waterbody has been around for about 10 years as a program that recognizes the volunteer water stewardship efforts of individuals, families and groups of all kinds throughout Utah.

In the past the program has waited for groups to apply. At that point the state issued a certificate of appreciation. That was it. Once in a while state funds were provided for projects. Sometimes, group requested technical assistance to complete their projects. But the state commitment was minimal.

The Governor's Watershed Initiative, announced Nov. 24, 2003, changes all that. The Governor has asked that the Adopt-A-Waterbody program double the number of adopting from the number of groups currently involved in projects.

Adopting groups can:

- Restore a stream bank or lake

shore by planting vegetation or repairing a trail/water access point.

- Monitor the water quality of a body of water by conducting physical, chemical or biological assessments.

- Clean up trash from in the water and along the stream bank or shoreline.

Educational projects and events will also be recognized as Adopt-A-Waterbody Watershed Education Programs. These efforts will not count toward the goal of doubling the number of Adopt-A-Waterbody groups, but they will be recognized with special certificates and publicized locally.

Another major difference in the AAW program this year is that the sponsoring agencies and their partners will offer more coordination and assistance to volunteer adopting groups than in the past.

For more information on the program, or other aspects of the Watershed Initiative, visit the web site, <http://adoptawaterbody.utah.gov/>.

Adopt-A-Waterbody (AAW) is an innovative community involvement program designed to benefit Utah's water resources and be rewarding educational for the volunteer groups involved. A partnership of three agencies directs the program. It includes the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, the Utah Department of Natural Resources, and the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food. In addition, Utah State University Water Quality Extension provides local coordination and assistance for water-related education, monitoring, and restoration activities.

Why Adopt?
The Adopt-A-Waterbody program unites a variety of volunteer groups throughout the state to work toward one purpose: to protect and enhance the waters of the beautiful state of Utah.

The program's goals are to:

- Promote water education activities.
- Encourage partnerships involving private groups and public agencies.
- Advocate pollution prevention through personal stewardship projects.
- Acknowledge the water quality education/improvement efforts of individuals and groups.

Who Can Adopt and Where?
Any individual or group can adopt a public surface or ground water resource, such as a lake, pond, stream, wetland, or aquifer. Some of the types of groups already involved in the program include individuals;

<http://adoptawaterbody.utah.gov/> 12/4/03

Water Fair Fun at Initiative Kickoff

Not all the 4th graders from Jackson Elementary necessarily know much or care much about state politics. Very few 4th graders do. But about 65 fourth grade students were happy to be part of a political event in late November.

State and local water agencies held a mini water fair just for the group from Jackson Elementary as part of the kickoff of the Governor's Watershed Initiative. While the children sat patiently through the political speeches that kicked off the yearlong focus on watersheds, they really seemed to enjoy the six interactive stations that took them through lessons about the water cycle, wetlands, surface water pollution and ground water pollution.

Each of the activities demonstrated during the kickoff event are available to be demonstrated at water fairs and in classrooms throughout the state.

Participating agencies at the kickoff included the Utah Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife Resources and Division of Water Resources, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Water Quality, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, Utah State University Extension, Utah Society for Environmental Quality, and the Living Planet Aquarium. Many local partners including soil conservation districts, Extension and Natural Resources Conservation districts also provide classroom demonstrations

throughout the state.

For more information about water education opportunities and to find partner web sites, log onto the Adopt-A-Waterbody/Governor's Watershed initiative page: [http://](http://adoptawaterbody.utah.gov)

adoptawaterbody.utah.gov. The Adopt-A-Waterbody page has all the information individuals or groups need join the program. Click on the Governor's photo to learn more about lesson plans and other parts of the Watershed Initiative.



Above: Andree' Walker, Utah State University, demonstrates the surface water model to students. The kids have fun pretending cocoa powder, drink mix powder and soy sauce are soil, fertilizers, road salts and oils.

Left: Governor Walkers looks on as students learn about the water cycle. With this model, students learn are precipitation, condensation, evaporation and other elements of the water cycle.

Below: Gabrielle Morey, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, talks to the students about some of the plants and animals that live in Utah's wetlands. She also explains how wetlands can filter out pollution from water. The kids even got to touch a live garter snake.

